

Commission on Streamlining Government

Senator Jack Donahue, *Chairman*
Roy O. Martin, *Vice Chair*
Angele Davis, Commissioner of
Administration
Barry Erwin
Brett F. Geymann, Representative
Leonal Hardman
John Kennedy, State Treasurer
Lansing Kolb
Mike Michot, Senator
Jim Morris, Representative



P. O. Box 44481
Baton Rouge, LA 70804
Telephone: (225) 342-2762
or 1-800-205-9873
Facsimile: (225) 342-9784
email: streamline@legis.state.la.us

Commission Staff
Jerry J. Guillot, *Administrator*
Tim Prather, *Coordinator*
Trudy Fourmy, *Secretary*

MINUTES FROM THE 2009 LISTENING TOUR

September 29, 2009
Shreveport City Council Chambers
505 Travis Street - 1st Floor of Governmental Plaza
Shreveport, Louisiana

DATE APPROVED: 11-03-09

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Commission on Streamlining Government Listening Tour was held at the Shreveport City Council Chambers in Shreveport, Louisiana at 10:00 a.m., September 29, 2009. Chairman Donahue called the meeting to order at approximately 10:05 a.m.

II. ATTENDEES

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Jack Donahue, Chairman
Leonal Hardman
Representative Jim Morris

INVITED LEGISLATORS/GUESTS

Senator Robert Adley
Senator Sherry Cheek
Senator Lydia Jackson
Lisa Barefield representing Senator Buddy Shaw
Representative Richard Burford
Representative Henry Burns
Representative Roy Burrell
Representative Jane Smith
Evans Spiceland

STAFF PRESENT

Tim Prather, Coordinator
Trudy Fourmy, Secretary

MEMBERS ABSENT

Roy Martin
Angele Davis
Barry Erwin
Representative Brett Geymann
Treasurer John Kennedy
Lansing Kolb
Senator Mike Michot

WITNESSES PRESENT

Bobby Bradley
Duane Ebarb
Holly Johnson
Kenneth Krefft
Janet Parker
Mary Anne Rankin
Larry Russo
Martha Whitlock
C. J. Smith

III. COMMISSION MEMBER COMMENTS

Chairman Donahue introduced the panel and the legislators from the area that were invited and then explained that the Streamlining Government Commission was formed. He then read the bill creating

this commission and its mission. He stated that there have been no decisions made to date and that five advisory groups were formed and the commission has not received any recommendations from them. He further explained that each of the five advisory groups consists of 2 commission members and 3 additional appointed persons. The advisory groups and the full Streamlining Government Commission have held numerous meetings. On October 13, the Commission will begin receiving recommendations from each of the five advisory groups. The advisory groups come before the Streamlining Government Commission, which will then vote to include or exclude their recommendations in the final report. The preliminary report is due on December 15 and the final report due on January 4, 2010. The final report will include any plan of action detailing what needs to be done and how it will be done. The purpose of today's meeting is to make the public aware that the Streamlining Government Commission exists, to answer questions, and to offer suggestions. Once the final report is complete, the Commission will return to various areas of state to encourage the public to help pass legislation recommended in the report during the next legislative session. The job of the commission is to determine what funding cuts should be made in the state. The commission wants to hear citizen's views, comments, and recommendations, which is why they are in Shreveport today.

Rep. Smith requested that Chairman Donahue go over briefly, some of the testimony heard from some of the meetings to give those not on the commission a summary of what has been of importance in those meetings. Senator Donahue stated that the advisory groups hear testimony and then they report to the commission. He stated that all meetings of this commission and its advisory groups are public. The Commission meets once a month, about thirty various meetings have been held around the state. State agencies, particularly the larger ones, such as Department of Health and Hospitals and the Department of Transportation, were asked to submit their mission and role in state government and list every program they sponsor, as well as where the program was established by law, to the Commission. This is an ongoing process. After the final report is completed, it will be presented to the Senate and House Governmental Affairs Committees who will review the proposals in a joint meeting.

Rep. Burrell asked if there were any preconceived efficiency bench marking that they were working on or if it would come out in the process and also asked about functionality studies. Also, he wanted to know if it was a "from top down" process or a "from bottom up" process. Senator Donahue answered that as the legislation was conceived, he did not have a specific goal in mind as far as the number of dollars that needed to be cut. He just thought we needed to look at the structure of the state and come up with recommendations. He referred to the recent letter sent out regarding his request for the commission to make recommendations to cut \$800 million while asking higher education to cut \$150 million. So there was no preconceived notion and he added that it is important to note that the governor will have to cut a billion dollars and that unless we come up with more money, that will be a driving force. They will discuss potential legislation to enact during the next legislative session. Chairman Donahue stated that it is his hope that the commission can establish priorities for the state so that health care and higher education funding doesn't continue to be cut. He then discussed outsourcing and privatizing. Rep. Burrell then discussed that there is not as much commitment from the companies outsourced but rather market and contractually driven.

Mr. Hardman commented that outsourcing is something that needs to be looked at in depth. He felt that we have great employees who work very satisfactorily. When looking at outsourcing, there should be feasibility studies done to determine if the dollars are being dedicated.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Kenneth Krefft suggested the law be changed to allow various board members to attend meetings electronically, thus saving the state the costs of per diem, hotel and travel expenditures. He also suggested that civil service merit increases not be automatic but rather based on performance and the state debt should be retired as quickly as possible. He also thought there are too many higher education institutions in the state, and that when someone enters the DROP program and retires, do not backfill and refill those jobs. Finally, he was of the opinion that too much money was dedicated in constitutional amendments and there would not be a problem if 100% of the budget was nondedicated and the funding should not be dedicated.

Duane Ebarb, LaCan, recommended that some developmental disability centers (Leesville and Columbia) be closed and consolidated with one of the larger facilities. If done, the property of those closed should be sold to the parishes and that money put into the New Opportunity Waivers (OCCD) to facilitate and move ahead with the home and community based support service. He also asked for implementation of the resource allocation module across all settings, not only with the waiver program, but with the ICMFR's, the intermediate care facilities. There are over 9,000 individuals still on the waiting list to receive services, some of which is backed up due to waiting for support coordinators or case managers to handle their individual cases. Senator Donahue then discussed the reallocation model with him. Rep. Smith added that she had concerns regarding the struggle and opposition in the attempt of what he wanted done. Mr. Ebarb agreed that families of individuals in the ICMFR's think the distances they would have to travel would be a hardship. The families are also wondering if their loved ones are receiving the same amount of care. He then discussed abuse in some of the facilities, the internal investigations and how protective services will not follow up on reports of abuse. This has been the major issues. Rep. Smith then asked Senator Donahue if there had been a lot of testimony received regarding this issue. Senator Donahue confirmed that they had received testimony and reported to her that several advisory groups were looking at this subject. Rep. Burrell expressed his concern regarding the families wanting their loved ones close to home so they could check on them and visit them more often.

C. J. Smith, Center for Lean Excellence, said that the automation software investment of the state should be examined. The definition of LEAN is a systematic and relentless approach to identifying non-value activities and eliminating waste for continuous improvement for the pursuit of excellence and perfection. The process should be mapped out the process, identify constraints and totally evaluated before investing in software and automation to ensure efficiency. Rep. Burns discussed requirements for various departments, especially the clean air act, which are exempt and how they have to file to be exempt and get fined if they do not. He then discussed some of the antiquated systems in the state and thought her concept was a good idea.

Rep. Morris stated tht Senator Shaw's office had received some questions from constituents and that he wanted to make them a part of the record, perhaps at the end of the meeting.

Janet Parker, The Arc of Caddo-Bossier, echoed Duane Ebarb's commented in regard to the developmental disability centers. She said Louisiana has the largest institution population per capita in the nation. The state needs to close the large congregate facilities for people with developmental disabilities as they are unnecessary white elephants. The services delivered have not been proven for the past few years to be the best practice, costs are too high and hurts everybody. Developmentally disabled persons can and should be taught to live a productive life outside of large facilities within their communities. Need to assure families that the services they are delivering at

the enormous cost have not been considered best practice for a generation. Not once has an individual asked her to help them go back to an institution.

Holly Johnson, Independent Living, said she wanted to speak on behalf of parents who have a child with disabilities and wanted home based services expanded. The developmentally disabled want the option to live independently at home. She discussed the vacancy rate at nursing homes. She urged a closer look be given at closing the large developmental facilities.

Martha Whitlock, a parent advocate, reiterated what previous others said in regard to closing the large developmental disability homes, stressing that these people want to live at home and be a part of the community. She felt the Department of Health and Hospitals was misleading legislators about home based services and requested that the cuts made to this service be restored. She said nursing homes got a 5% increase, many of them with empty beds. The Department of Health and Hospitals should not be bailing out what people don't want, while cutting funding for the home based services that people do want. They prefer waivers rather than nursing homes.

Bobby Bradley, LSU Health Sciences Center, asked in streamlining government, what we replaced it with. He asked if we were talking about giving our people the best of service or just cutting the service. He stressed that if we went to privatizing (for profit), we should make sure our citizens will receive services that are needed.

Mary Anne Rankin, Bossier Council on Aging, said she represented seniors which are the fastest growing population in the country. The goal of the Councils on Aging is to keep seniors in their homes as long as possible. She explained that they did not receive any cuts this year, as expected, and they appreciated that. They need food and services in order to remain in their own homes and to maintain themselves. She spoke in support of Project 2020 which is the movement to transfer medicaid money into community based services that Councils on Aging provide.

Larry Russo expressed concern with public employment retirement. He said the annuity value for each public employee in the state exceeds one million dollars. The retirement of public employees far exceeds what a private employee can achieve in the workplace. He asked that abuses taking place within public employee retirements be recognized. He thought a person should not be able to get full retirement at the age of fifty. He made reference to a friend that retired with state police and now works with the sheriffs and will receive another retirement. He stated that his friend had the opportunity to stack retirement pension over retirement pension. He testified that he had information to give the panel with regard to this. Rep. Burrell asked if he was stating that state government employees are getting rich. Mr. Russo answered that he was saying that the value of retirement cannot be matched in the private sector. He added that he had a report of statistics and gave an example of a teacher retiring. If one is patient and will stick with their profession, they would have more resources than the private sector.

Senator Donahue discussed packages in private practice vs. government. He thought we need to be very careful in looking at the real total cost. It was his impression that state employees have a retirement program but no social security benefits. Senator Adley made a point regarding his own personal retirement. Senator Donahue stated that the evaluation of a retirement package is very important. Mr. Hardman reminded everyone that they might think that the retirement is good but that their salaries are low. Rep. Morris stated that the advisory group studying this would not leave any stones unturned and would contact Mr. Russo later for his information. Rep. Burrell was of the opinion that people went to public employment for security purposes later on.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

Representative Morris read some questions that had been submitted to Senator Shaw in regard to how New Orleans City Park's 240 employees are paid to staff a park and if all of them come to work, why they are on state payroll He also had a question from one of his constituents that dealt with housing provided to wardens throughout the state and asked how many individuals were provided housing out of the state coffers.

V. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chairman Donahue thanked everyone for coming and especially thanked the City of Shreveport, then adjourned the meeting at 11:45 a.m.

NOVEMBER 3, 2009

DATE APPROVED

Chairman Jack Donahue